

# CONSUMERS'

*Guide*

VOLUME IV, NUMBER 9

JULY 26, 1937



## PICKING A WINNER

# CONSUMERS' *Guide*

Issued every two weeks by the Consumers' Counsel, Agricultural Adjustment Administration, Department of Agriculture, Washington, D. C.

VOL. IV, No. 9 JULY 26, 1937

How one large city department store is working toward more and better buying information for consumers on labels and in advertising is recounted in a recent issue of a trade journal. First, this notice was sent to merchandise managers and buyers: "We believe that our customers are entitled to more complete information than we are now able to give concerning many articles which we sell. With that object in view, you are directed when buying merchandise to request your resources to correctly describe the fabric and content of the material and to enter this description plainly on your order in each and every instance."

Next the store checked up on the content facts given on signs throughout the store, and sent orders to all copywriters: (1) Insist that buyers requesting advertising give "complete information regarding the fabric, wood, metal, or any other material of which the item is made"; (2) never use words like "crepe", "satin", "taffeta" without qualifying fabric nouns; (3) "write your copy so clearly that there CAN BE NO question in the mind of the reader as to what the material is in the product"; (4) never use an asterisk to qualify a "word, phrase, or thought in an advertisement."

Third, the store wrote to its "resources", the firms from which it makes its purchases: "For a long time we have not been satisfied with the information we have been giving our customers about the goods we

sell. We have answered questions about the washability and other qualities of the merchandise, often without ourselves feeling entirely confident in the information we were giving. Often we could not even say with certainty what fibers went into the making of a piece of merchandise; how much silk, wool, cotton, rayon, celanese, bemberg, or other fabrics. Like other stores, we have made certain laboratory tests, but it is obviously impossible for a retail store to do this with the thousands of units that it handles. It seems clear that this information should originate where the merchandise originates. . . . We would appreciate your cooperation with us by supplying this information in the form of a tag or label attached to the goods or the container, or, where that is impracticable, then on the invoice."

Replies like these came back from some of the manufacturers: "In some fabrics, the mere naming of fiber content means nothing—some method of denoting *quality* must be worked out." . . . "There are too many materials used in the manufacturing (of one line of merchandise) to permit intelligent content description or tagging." . . . "Not enough stores have requested labeling of merchandise to justify the expense." Undaunted by the many problems along the route to informative labeling, this department store intends to continue to press its campaign.

FROM Detroit, Mich., comes a bundle of consumer questions about sugar: "What are the different stages of processing raw sugar into white?" "Why *white* sugar at all? Is it a *dead* food?" "Brown sugar costs more than white, yet it has less processing. Why so high?"

First, to the question of manufacture. There are five operations involved in transforming sugarcane into raw sugar. In operation No. 1

the juice is extracted from the cane by means of crushers. Second, this juice is purified by adding lime and heating; third, it is evaporated until it becomes sirup; fourth, this sirup is brought to a point where crystals form; fifth, these crystals are separated by centrifugal force from the mother liquid that is molasses.

Most of the resulting raw sugar goes to the refinery to be converted into white sugar. A small amount is packaged and sold to consumers as one type of brown sugar. Health food shops often display this kind. Raw sugar is about 97 percent pure sugar, or sucrose to give it another name. The rest consists of moisture, mineral salts, and nonsugar substances that were derived from the cane juice.

Refining removes even more of the molasses, the coloring matter, and whatever other nonsugar impurities are present. Hence this process whitens the sugar. Briefly, this is what happens at the refinery: The sugar crystals are washed and dissolved. Then sodium carbonate is added as neutralizer, if the raw sugar is acid. Next comes filtering with the help of an insoluble filter aid. Bone charcoal then plays its part in absorbing color and nonsugar impurities. Result—the amber sugar sirup changes to a clear water-white liquor. Boiling this liquor brings about the crystallization of pure white sugar—a product that runs about 99.9 percent sucrose.

Now consider the brown sugar usually found in commerce. Contrary to opinion, this brown sugar is a product of the *refinery*. After three or four boilings, the water-white liquor becomes colored again, no longer yields white crystal. Further crystallizations give yellow to dark-brown sugars. These brown sugars consumers generally buy for their Christmas baking, or whenever they want the characteristic brown-

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**With watermelons, it's bigness that counts. Knowing types, seasons, and how to spot a ripe one helps, too, in getting your money's worth of this important summer diversion**

**A**BOUT this time of year farmers traditionally load their shotguns with rock salt, stand ready to let fly at young marauders. For watermelons are in their prime, and thoughts of luscious pink watermelon slices lure small boys to raid the nearest watermelon patch. Most consumers will get their melons in more orthodox manner at the market. There they will thump and thumb melons of various colors,

shapes and sizes—the Watsons, Thurmond Grays, Wondermelons. These are good shippers, coming long distances by rail to compete with local products such as Cuban Queen, frequently grown for nearby marketing. Cuban Queen is a round, medium-sized fruit with light-green mottled rind.

Top-price seller all over the country is the Tom Watson, a large cylindrical watermelon with deep-

green, faintly veined skin. Flesh is red, firm, and somewhat coarse in texture. Popular though they were, the original Watson strains were open to complaint on account of a hard white streak that sometimes ran through the flesh. This fault, however, has been bred out in such newcomers to the family as Gilbert's Cut-Red Watson, a big glossy melon that is fine eating from start to finish.

Thurmond Gray wins honors as another melon success—quite different in appearance from the Watsons. Its rind is a light grayish green in color and is thin but tough. The delectable dark-red flesh is stringless, fine grained, and tender. Because

of its firmness, the melon stands long train trips well. Like the Watson, the Thurmond Gray runs around 30 or 40 pounds.

Leading commercial watermelon of the round type is the Stone Mountain or Dixie Belle, its names suggesting the hearty reception accorded it in the South. The Dixie Belle matures to an ideal size and produces prolifically. The green fruit rind covers a tender melting flesh of showy bright scarlet hue.

Growers focus interest on a new watermelon strain that has been developed to resist the watermelon's worst enemy—watermelon wilt disease. Already one of these melons, Pride of Muscatine, has been boosted for commercial watermelon growing. It has dark-green, thick

rind and crisp, tender, red flesh. Pride of Muscatine has the long cylindrical body that has outstripped in popularity the oval shape generally preferred a few seasons ago.

Just when consumers begin to think that watermelon season is over, a late comer makes its debut at the grocer's—a small round melon grown in Colorado and California and sold under a number of noms de guerre—Winter Queen, Winter King, Alaska, Klondike. Quality is only medium, but the melon keeps well, and on that account is a decided addition to the melon family.

We are apt to think of watermelons as a native plant. Certainly we associate borsch or beets, rather than watermelons, with Russia, but it was the Russians emigrating from the

Volga River section who introduced their prized watermelon strains—including this round-melon type—in the Rocky Ford district of Colorado.

Watermelons grow over a wide range of territory, but though they reach as far north as Michigan and Minnesota, over 90 percent of the volume shipped comes from below the 37th parallel. That gives the southern part of the United States an unbeatable lead in production, with Georgia stealing the show with its annual crop of 12 million melons. Eastern Texas, the Imperial Valley and central California, Florida, South and North Carolina, Virginia, and Missouri record large volume watermelon production, with 14 other States also heard from.

Florida and the Imperial Valley commence the watermelon season in May, with Texas hot on their heels. Their shipments are heaviest in June when Georgia starts shipping.

Southern growers plant watermelons on newly cleared land, since such soil contains abundant plant food, withstands dry weather well. Moreover, the likelihood is that new land won't carry disease to melon crops. These watermelons and those on page 3 are the popular Watsons.





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July 26, 1937

As warm weather creeps northward, watermelon season keeps pace with it. July is the peak month for watermelon production, but northernmost States may see the last of the melon shipments in October. With the eastern States out of the way, California and Colorado then hold the field alone, continuing to send melons to market until Christmas.

Total acreage in all States in 1936 stood at 256,600. Watermelon growers produced 63,300,000 melons, although this number included many left unharvested because of unfavorable market conditions. Farm value came to approximately \$8,000,000—highest since 1930.

Making sure of good watermelons in the market basket isn't a matter of snap judgment. Professional graders from long experience can choose melons by eye alone. Consumers need extra aids. Some consumers rely on the old-fashioned test for ripeness—thumping the melon and listening for the dull, hollow sound that is supposed to indicate the right state of maturity. This test is not dependable, however, since the mature melon may be "dead ripe" or stale. Then the flesh would more than likely be relatively dry and mealy. Safety lies in having the melon plugged so that consumers can see and taste for themselves.

Sweetness and delicacy of flavor are the things to look for in melons. These are best when the fruit is fully mature, irrespective of shape of the melon or color of the seed. Ripe melons of good quality are usually firm, symmetrical, and of a good color—varying according to variety from gray to dark green. The fruit should have a bloom over the surface that gives the rind a velvety appearance. For full ripeness, the lower side of the melon where it rested upon the ground should be yellowish white. Melons that measure up to these requirements will



Consumers appreciate the crisp flesh and luscious flavor of the Cuban Queen, round to oval in shape, with a rind striped light and dark green.

more than likely have crisp, juicy flesh.

With watermelons bigness counts. Choose a big melon because it will usually be more symmetrical and have more heart that is free from seed.

Avoid melons that have worm injury showing itself in healed-over punctures. Grooves often extend from these perforations into the flesh. Watch out for decay too. Oftenest this appears at the stem end as discoloration and softening. Many growers paint the freshly cut stems with a bluish paste of starch and copper sulphate to prevent the development of the stem-end rot. Decay puts in an appearance at the blossom end as a flattened, leathery

spot about the size of a silver dollar. Should dark, watery spots appear on the rind, don't discard the fruit as long as this type of decay hasn't penetrated the surface.

Some watermelons have a hard white streak running lengthwise through the flesh. Such melons aren't the ones to take home for dinner, but how to tell these melons is a question that hasn't been solved except by actually cutting through the melon.

The United States Department of Agriculture has defined quality standards for watermelons as for many other fruits and vegetables. However, these grades, U. S. No. 1, U. S. No. 2, and Unclassified, with their quality, size, and shape require-

ments, are of more use to the trade than to the consumer, since no mark appears on the melons.

Consumers are right in thinking of watermelon as an ideal hot-weather food—short on calories and long on thirst-quenching properties. Watermelon is over 90 percent water—a water pleasingly flavored with natural sugar. Watermelons rate only fair for each of the Vitamins A, B, C, G. They score only poor to fair when it comes to minerals. But there is this cheering note—vitamin values are based on weight. An ounce of watermelon may not give consumers as much vitamin content as an ounce of strawberries, but no consumer stops with an ounce of watermelon. He finishes off a plate-size slab to ask for more.

Just because watermelons are easy to eat doesn't mean that they are easy to market. Growers and shippers can tell a tale of marketing risks and misfortunes that would make consumers wonder why they have melons at all.

Overproduction is the factor that has knocked marketing into a cocked hat, sent prices to farmers on the toboggan to ruinously low levels. Too often the market news service in large cities gives the report about watermelons, "On track 100, unloads 30"—showing that markets are glutted, since watermelon carloads are piling up at railroad terminals three times as fast as they are being sold.

Always to be reckoned with in marketing watermelons is the matter of the weather. Hot weather jacks up watermelon demand. But it may not be until well along in July that a heat wave will make consumers take off their coats, mop their brows, and order a refreshing slice of crisp watermelon. The rest of the time melons may go begging for buyers.

Another complicating factor in the marketing picture is consumer income. When consumer budgets are big they include so-called luxury foods, watermelons among them. At such times consumers are willing to pay good prices and farmers are content. But let a depression flatten pocketbooks and consumers strike melons off the market list.

Figures point up these problems. When "prosperity" was hitting on all cylinders in 1929, farmers produced 80 million melons, received \$170 per thousand. Encouraged, farmers expanded production—disastrously, as it turned out; for the depression year of 1930 brought a sharp drop in consumer incomes, reflected in low prices of \$116 to farmers. As a result, 5,500,000 melons were left unharvested. 1931 and 1932 were bad years, too. Although acreage had been reduced in 1932, prices received by growers were averaging only \$80 per thousand—lowest price on record. As a drastic measure farmers cut acreage 20 percent. Since then business has recovered to a certain extent, and with it watermelon fortunes. Acreage is again expanding, although, as in 1935, farmers are apt to be unduly optimistic, increasing acreage too rapidly for their own good, with consequent glutting of markets, and thousands of melons left in the fields to rot. Because acreage was reduced about 6 percent in 1936, prices snapped back to \$128 per thousand melons.

When there is danger that markets may be glutted, the marketing agreements sponsored by the Agricultural Adjustment Administration help out—their aim is to strengthen prices by regulating interstate shipments of various products. In the case of watermelons, such an agreement has been in force for 3 years in Florida, South Carolina, North Car-

olina, and Georgia. These four States dominate markets east of the Mississippi during their season from May to September.

The marketing agreement now in effect provides for periodic regulation by grade or size to keep inferior melons off the market, and to halt shipments for periods not to exceed 48 hours, holding back melons from markets that are oversupplied. Twice during the summer in 1936 shipments were restricted. So successful was the agreement in that year that it was given credit for being an important factor in raising the average price received by growers in those States to a level 92 percent higher than that in the previous season.

Around July 4, watermelon shipments usually need to be suspended—and have been in certain regions in the last two seasons. At that time growers become overoptimistic in anticipating holiday trade, and send to market more carloads of watermelons than can be disposed of. Consequently prices drop sharply. Watermelon history repeated itself this year. On June 26, market quotations gave price averages as \$219 a car. By June 29, these had sunk to \$100 per car. To right matters, the Secretary of Agriculture authorized the holding back of shipments. That is, shipments of watermelons from Florida, Georgia, South Carolina, and North Carolina were stopped for 48 hours.

Though profits on watermelons are low, watermelons are a cheap crop to produce. Watermelon culture demands well-drained, warm soil, capable of being worked early in the spring. Growers plant from February in Florida to May in the North. To avoid possibility of loss from frost, a second seeding often follows shortly after the first. During the growing period, farmers

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## MORE ABOUT MINERALS

**There's only a penny's weight of iron in the average body, but it plays a major part in making bodies good working and playing machines\***

IMPORTANT WORK which minerals do for us in building good red blood, firm bones, muscles, and teeth, and in regulating and coordinating all our complicated body processes, is way out of proportion to the minute amounts we require.

Scientists do not know as yet the exact quantity of every mineral existent in the normal human body. They do know that the minerals—calcium, phosphorus, iron, potassium, sulphur, sodium, chlorine, magnesium, iodine, manganese, and copper—are essential to us, and that we depend upon food for our supply of these minerals.

Out of this long list star three—calcium, phosphorus, and iron. If your diet provides food which gives you your quota of these three, it is more than likely that it will also have required amounts of the other necessary

minerals. For the importance of calcium in the diet, and foods rich in calcium, see "Bone Builder No. 1", CONSUMERS' GUIDE, October 19, 1936; for phosphorus, "Bone Builder No. 2", CONSUMERS' GUIDE, November 2, 1936.

Green-colored vegetables, fruit, some meats, whole grains, and milk are the reliable sources for most minerals. Milk is a four-star source for both calcium and phosphorus. If a child has a deficit of these two elements, more milk per day is the best prescription. Milk is often called a "foundation food" as it provides some of every food element which we need. However, its supply of some elements is more generous than others. Though iron is present in milk, it is not present in sufficient amounts for us to rely on it for all the iron we need for blood building.

Experimental studies of rats fed on a milk diet have shown that they developed normally for from 4 to 6

weeks and then stopped growing. Some died; some developed anemia—a condition in which the blood is lacking in red corpuscles. When foods with a higher content of iron and containing some copper were given them, the sick rats rapidly improved. The function of copper in building blood is not completely understood, but copper seems to aid the body in the utilization of iron. The tiny bit of copper we need, however, does not need to concern us seriously, for it is present in most green vegetables, fruits, cereals, and meats, and often it is added to our food through modern methods of processing food. Copper is present in milk when it is pasteurized by being passed over heated copper rollers.

The iron we get in food is first absorbed from the intestines. Before it does any work for us, however, it must be combined with other substances to form a compound called hemoglobin. This change takes place chiefly in the bone marrow. Hemoglobin is an intrinsic part of each one of the trillions of red blood corpuscles which carry oxygen to the innermost cells of every organ and tissue and carry away the waste product, carbon dioxide. But iron is not only present in the red corpuscles. It is an essential part of every living cell in our body and helps to carry on the vital functions of the cell. The amount of iron a normal person has in his body equals the weight of a penny, or less than one-tenth of an ounce. Nevertheless, the importance of the work it does for us cannot be overemphasized.

At birth, nature gives us a running start on iron. The percentage of iron in an infant's body is three times greater than that of an adult. His reserve supply tides the baby over the first few months when he is on a liquid diet. Then if he is to grow into an energetic child, it is

\*Other special articles in this nutrition series have been published in these issues: Apr. 20, May 18, June 15, June 29, July 27, Oct. 19, and Nov. 2, 1936, and July 12, 1937.

necessary to add food containing iron to his diet.

Growing children and adults cannot store iron in their bodies to use during an emergency as they do the fuel food, fat. We draw upon our iron supply every day. Therefore, to maintain our iron equilibrium we should eat some foods rich in iron every day. Scientific studies have shown that for individuals the iron requirement varies from 6 to 16 milligrams a day and that the desirable allowance for both the adult and growing child is 15 milligrams, or 5 ten-thousandths of an ounce per day.

Iron is present in many foods. Whole-grain cereals are a source of iron and one that gives us many energy-yielding calories as well. When food money is limited and one must select foods carefully to get double value for each penny spent, whole bran and oatmeal offer an economical source for part of one's daily quota of iron. Liver, kidney, brains, and the head of meat animals top the list as iron sources. The lean muscles of beef, veal, lamb, pork, and the dark meat of poultry are very good. Green leaves of vegetables, which add vitamins to the diet, too, are a rich source. Egg yolks, oysters, and shrimps contain iron. However, the amount of iron in each of these foods is relatively so small that we would have to eat more than a normal portion of any one of them to get our necessary quota at one meal. For instance, to get your 5 ten-thousandths of an ounce of iron from spinach alone, you would have to eat 2½ cups of it; of egg yolks, about a dozen; of baked beans or lean beef, more than a pound. When we eat canned fruits and vegetables we are apt to increase our intake of iron. Experiments have shown that these products absorb some iron from the can. Pureed prunes canned in glass

## FOODS RICH IN IRON

### ANIMAL FOODS

#### Egg Yolks

#### Meats

liver	also lean muscle of beef
kidney	veal
brain	pork
heart	lamb
	and dark meat of poultry

#### Fish

oysters	shrimp
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### VEGETABLE FOODS

#### Green Leaves

turnip	watercress
beet tops	spinach
chard	kale
dandelion	New Zealand spinach
mustard greens	broccoli leaves

#### Dried Fruits

apricots	figs
peaches	prunes
currants	raisins
dates	

#### Whole Grain Flours or Cereals

wheat	rye
barley	oats

#### Sirups

molasses	cane sirups
sorghum	

#### Legumes, Either Fresh or Dried Seeds

limas	cowpeas
lentils	soybeans
common or kidney beans	common peas

#### Nuts, Unblanched

almonds	pecans
hazelnuts	hickory nuts
walnuts	

had an iron content of 0.0011 percent. A similar product in a tin container had from 0.0031 to 0.0052 percent. It is best not to depend on

iron absorbed by canned foods as a source. The secret of getting enough iron day by day is to eat many different foods containing it.





## Consumers and farmers in the business of supplying their needs cooperatively report developments in seven States

GENERAL—"Cooperatives must learn to cooperate" was the theme of the American Institute of Cooperation held June 21-25 at Iowa State College in Ames, Iowa. More than a thousand cooperative leaders, representing marketing and purchasing cooperatives in 32 States, considered the relationship between marketing and consumers' cooperatives. Stressing the importance of the cooperative purchasing movement, one speaker pointed out that four co-ops which purchased only a million dollars' worth of commodities in 1920 expanded purchases by 1937 to 29 million dollars. Two new trends point to the coming maturity of cooperatives in America: The formation of federations of cooperatives extending from coast to coast, including both rural and urban cooperatives, and the resolve of more purchasing cooperatives to go into the business of production. Sounding a warning, one speaker pointed out that in Great Britain misunderstandings over definitions were keeping consumer and farm cooperatives separated. . . . Cooperative education leaders from America's major consumers' cooperatives met at Grand View College, Des Moines, Iowa, June 18-20, to take stock of consumer education. Education directors and editors discussed ways of promoting cooperative education, the cooperative press, and cooperative recreation. Illustrating the discussions on cooperative recreation, students from the National Coop-

erative Recreation School gave an exhibition of plays, folk games, and folk dances.

REPRESENTATIVES from California's Fruit Growers Exchange reported that its members now produce 85 percent of all California citrus fruits, operate 200 canning factories. The exchange supplies cooperators with trained picking crews and equipment, traveling spraying and insect-control squads, traveling pruning crews. It maintains soil-testing laboratories and operates a fruit supply service. . . . From New England came a report that the Eastern States Farmers Exchange now has 70,000 farmer members and annual sales of 25 million dollars. . . . Tenant farming provokes problems for cooperative creameries. To meet them some creameries have lowered membership fees and arranged to refund fees when the tenant cooperator moves on.

NATIONAL Cooperatives, Inc., has decided to apply voltage to the distribution of electrical appliances. Approximately 1,000 retail cooperatives in 21 States are served by the 11 cooperative wholesale associations affiliated with this national organization. These associations include the Central Cooperative Wholesale, Superior, Wis.; Consumers' Cooperative Association, North Kansas City, Mo.; Midland Cooperative Wholesale, Minneapolis, Minn.; Farmers' Union Central Exchange, St. Paul,

Minn.; Ohio Farm Bureau Cooperative Association, Columbus, Ohio; Indiana Farm Bureau Cooperative Association, Indianapolis, Ind.; Farm Bureau Services, Lansing, Mich.; Pennsylvania Farm Bureau Cooperative Association, Harrisburg, Pa.; Consumers' Cooperatives Associated, Amarillo, Tex.; Pacific Supply Cooperative, Walla Walla, Wash.; and Eastern Cooperative Wholesale, New York City, N. Y. National Cooperatives is now distributing a long line of electrical appliances, beginning with refrigerators and going right through a list of appliances: ranges, washing machines, radios, vacuum cleaners, milkers, cooling tanks, lamps, fans, toasters, roasters, grills, and a host of small electrical gadgets. Four electrical shows have been held so far in co-op centers, Columbus, Ohio; Kansas City, Mo.; Chicago; and Minneapolis. All cooperative wholesale members now stock these appliances which are sold at current market prices. Purchasers who are cooperative members get their savings in patronage dividends. To help consumers who must buy "on time", National Cooperatives hopes that the sale of electrical appliances will be financed through credit unions.

ILLINOIS.—Chicago summaries of co-op activities total up to a modest figure. There are now 6,100 members of various cooperative businesses in the Chicago area. These co-ops employ 139 persons, do an estimated business of \$1,485,000 a year, \$4,800 a day.

INDIANA.—Rural credit unions now operate in about 40 Indiana counties. Leading the State is the credit union in Noble County. Since its organization 5 years ago, it has loaned members \$105,839. It now has 566 members with shares valued at \$35,000. Outstanding loans total \$30,747, an average of about \$200.

Interest rates on loans are 7 percent annually, and at the end of the year shareholders receive in dividends 4 percent on their shares. Loans are made for a variety of purposes: To pay taxes, to meet medical expenses, hospital and doctor bills, to buy farm equipment.

**IOWA.**—Dying is often a burden on the living. To lighten one of the burdens of death from the backs of those who must carry on, cooperators met in Pella, Iowa, in 1929 to consider what could be done about the high cost of funeral services and caskets. Results of their activities are apparent today in the Iowa State Federation of Burial Associations, with its 10-member burial societies. Largest of the societies is the Pella Cooperative Burial Society with 869 members. On the basis of Iowa co-operators' experience a burial society needs 500 members with an investment of \$5,000 to start such a co-operative. Yearly budget for such a society contemplates expenses amounting to \$3,750, including the salary of a licensed embalmer and rent. Income from an estimated 50 burials would be \$3,750, or \$75 a funeral.

**MICHIGAN.**—Leadership can't be left to chance if cooperatives are to go on. One hundred farm youths are to receive training for leadership at the Michigan Farm Bureau's Rural Young Peoples Leadership Training Conference at Waldenwoods Camp, near Hartford, Mich., August 29 to September 4. Training in publicity methods will be gained from the publication of a daily camp paper . . . "Shall farmers take up with city consumer cooperatives?" asks the Michigan Farm Bureau paper, which goes on to answer its own question: "It would be best for farm cooperatives to use their efforts and resources to develop and

strengthen their own organization rather than dissipating the farmers' money and personnel in furthering urban cooperative movements . . ." The other side of this argument was stated at Ames, Iowa, where the annual meeting of the American Institute of Cooperation was held. Said one speaker, "There is need for greater unity in the cooperative ranks and for recognition that organizations of both buyers and sellers are alike attempts to diminish the wastes of distribution and to organize those processes in the interests of the broad masses of the people." Speaking directly to marketing cooperatives, another speaker urged them to "explore the newer and more constructive devices for enlarging the market and expanding their field of activity in the service of the consumer."

Here is an example of a consumers' co-op which, in order to increase the income of its members, went into producers' co-op activity. The cheese factory started by a cooperative retail store at Pelkie, Mich., a few years ago is now running night and day; 58,565 pounds were made in April. Also, the co-op has sold five tractors this spring, and two to three cars of farm machinery were sold in April. The store is hustling, too, April volume having been \$15,994 as compared with \$8,554 in the previous April.

**MINNESOTA.**—America's first cooperative oil wholesale closed its tenth year of business with 10 times the volume of its first year. Midland Cooperative Wholesale, with headquarters at Minneapolis, began in 1927 with 37 member cooperatives and a business of \$269,000. Today it is serving 160 member cooperatives and has an annual business of \$3,000,000. During the last year, Midland opened a branch ware-

house and compounding plant in Milwaukee; added electrical appliances to the list of commodities it distributes; increased its membership by 19 retail co-ops; joined two other co-op wholesales; and contracted for the output of an oil refinery in Oklahoma. Savings last year totaled \$71,500. Of this, \$48,000 was returned in dividends to member co-ops; \$15,000 went into reserves.

Can an oil cooperative successfully expand into the grocery field, was the question Cambridge, Minn., co-operators asked themselves 5 years ago. Now the Isanti County Cooperative Association of Cambridge points to its own record to prove such things are possible. Cambridge is a town of 1,200 persons in a small farming county with a population of 12,000 persons. In this small community, the co-op distributed \$214,000 worth of merchandise in 1936. On this they saved \$22,500. In 4 years and 5 months the co-op sold its members \$559,000, saved them \$68,000. Assets in the same period grew from \$1,800 to \$56,000. Employees have been sent to summer camps and training schools. The Women's Guild has carried on educational work in Cambridge itself. Present project is a credit union. Organized only a few months ago, it already has 126 members, shares add up to \$4,627, loans to 55 borrowers total \$4,422.

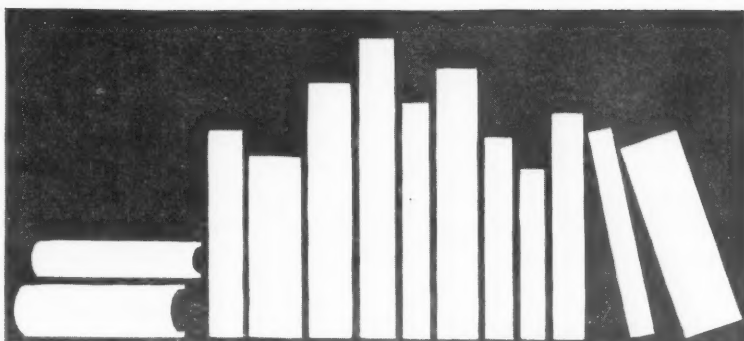
**MISSOURI.**—Cooperation around the world takes on tangible meaning in the light of a bulletin from the Consumers' Cooperative Association oil plant in North Kansas City, Mo. Oil is now being shipped from this plant to cooperatives in France, Scotland, Belgium, and Estonia. Furthering cooperation between national groups, the Consumers' Cooperative Association is sending a delegate to the International Cooperative Alli-

ance meetings in Paris, September 6-9, where proposed International Cooperative Oil Wholesale will be discussed.

**NEW YORK.**—Beginning with a housing project, the two largest American housing cooperatives, Amalgamated Housing Corporation and Amalgamated Dwellings, have now gone on to establish their own electric cooperative right in the center of New York City. Until this year electricity was purchased wholesale and distributed cooperatively to members. When the public service commission abolished this arrangement the cooperative purchased a \$70,000 Diesel plant. Now in operation, the plant is expected to save members about \$20,000 a year on their electric bills. These savings, if effected, added to rent dividends, which totaled \$30,000 in 1936, and dividends from the cooperative commissary, reaching \$7,500 in the same year, provide a sizeable argument for cooperation to the 800 member families.

Taking a leaf out of the lessons of the European cooperatives, the Consumer Cooperative Services of New York City, which operates 10 cooperative cafeterias, voted to pay its employees 10 percent above the average hourly rate specified in the 10 best wage contracts the Cafeteria Workers Union has with other employers. This is the same formula most European cooperatives follow in their relationships with employees.

Eastern Cooperative Wholesale, with headquarters in New York City, reports progress. Formed only a year ago to pool the orders of 30 retail co-ops, it now serves 157 retail cooperative outlets, distributes 155 products under the "Co-op" label. For the first 4 months of 1937 it had a total business of \$161,000, an 86-percent gain over last year.



## Consumers' BOOKSHELF

**More sources of information for students of consumer problems on how to select wisely and economically household necessities\***

### DENTIFRICES MOUTHWASHES

**COMMON SENSE IN MOUTH HYGIENE**, by William M. Gardner. 1926, pp. 18, illustrated. Address: American Medical Association, 535 North Dearborn Street, Chicago, Ill. 15 cents. Discusses the selection and proper use of toothbrushes, dentifrices, and mouthwashes.

**"DOCTOR, WHAT DENTIFRICES DO YOU RECOMMEND?"** by Council on Dental Therapeutics. March 1937, pp. 9, mimeographed. Address: Council on Dental Therapeutics, American Dental Association, Chicago, Ill. 3-cent stamp. Gives the standards set up by the Council on Dental Therapeutics for approved dentifrices. Discusses the advertising claims of a number of tooth powders and tooth pastes and includes a list of those approved by the Council.

### DINNERWARE

**THE SELECTION OF DINNERWARE FOR THE HOME**, by Arthur S.

\*Thirteenth installment of our consumer bibliography. The twelfth appeared in the May 17 issue.

Watts. Engineering Experiment Station Circular No. 21. Second revised edition November 1936, pp. 16. Address: Engineering Experiment Station, Ohio State University, Columbus, Ohio. 5 cents. Defines and discusses the properties of earthenware, china, and porcelain. Also considers the decoration, comparative cost, grades, and common faults of the various kinds of dinnerware.

### DISINFECTANTS

**SOME COMMON DISINFECTANTS**, by M. Doreet, U. S. Bureau of Animal Industry. Farmers' Bulletin No. 926. March 1918, revised May 1931, pp. 10. Address: Superintendent of Documents, Washington, D. C. 5 cents. Distinguishes between the terms, disinfectant, antiseptic, insecticide, and deodorant. Discusses the values and limitations of 10 common disinfectants used about the household and the farm.

### DRAINPIPE CLEANERS

**DRAINPIPE CLEANERS OR SOLVENTS.** Letter Circular LC-341. August 1, 1932, pp. 2, mimeographed.

Address: National Bureau of Standards, U. S. Department of Commerce, Washington, D. C. Free. Mentions several common chemical compounds which may be used as drainpipe cleaners and discusses the chemical action that results from their use.

## GARDEN EQUIPMENT

**SELECTION AND CARE OF GARDEN HOSE**, by P. L. Wormley and W. L. Holt, National Bureau of Standards. Circular C327. April 20, 1927, pp. 12. Address: Superintendent of Documents, Washington, D. C. 10 cents.

## INKS

**INKS**, by C. E. Waters, National Bureau of Standards. Circular C413. December 28, 1936, pp. 54. Address: Superintendent of Documents, Washington, D. C. 10 cents. [A technical bulletin describing different types of inks and the uses for which they are best adapted.]

## JEWELRY

**FACTS YOU SHOULD KNOW ABOUT JEWELRY**, by Boston Better Business Bureau, Inc. 1936, pp. 12. Address: National Better Business Bureau, Inc., Chrysler Building, New York, N. Y. 5 cents. Gives general suggestions for buying watches, clocks, silverware. Includes a section on the care of jewelry.

## LEATHER

**AMERICAN LEATHERS**. 1929, pp. 128, illustrated. Address: Tanners' Council of America, 100

Gold Street, New York, N. Y. 50 cents. Describes the parts of a shoe. Tells how leather is tanned and finished and describes the sources and uses of the following types of leather: calf, cowhide, patent, kid, sheep, reptile, buckskin, shark, horsehide, ostrich, kangaroo, pigskin, and seal. Includes a 3-page bibliography.

**DICTIONARY OF LEATHER TERMINOLOGY**. Second edition. 1936, pp. 22. Address: Tanners' Council of America, 100 Gold Street, New York, N. Y. 10 cents. This pamphlet, "dedicated to the public in the interest of truth in merchandising", lists leathers according to their origin and defines terms of general use in the leather industry.

**LEATHER: QUESTIONS AND ANSWERS**, prepared for Retailers' Testing League. L-46. 1936, pp. 4, mimeographed. Address: United States Testing Co., Inc., 1415 Park Avenue, Hoboken, N. J. 20 cents. A highly technical bulletin giving information on the physical structure of leather, changes occurring in leather during the manufacturing process, and the different characteristics of horse, sheep, pig, shark, and salmon skin.

## LUMBER

**CHOOSING WOODS FOR FLOORS**, by Charlotte P. Brooks. Brieflet No. 455. December 1936, pp. 3, diagrams, mimeographed. Address: Extension Service, University of Vermont, Burlington, Vt. Free. Brief statement of the advantages and disadvantages of each of the common woods for use as flooring materials.

**FLOORS AND FLOOR COVERINGS**, by U. S. Bureau of Home Economics. Farmers' Bulletin No. 1219. September 1921, pp. 30, illustrated. Address: Superintendent of Documents, Washington, D. C. 5 cents. A section of this bulletin discusses woods suitable for flooring.

**GRADE MARKING OF LUMBER FOR THE CONSUMERS' PROTECTION**, by National Committee on Wood Utilization. Report No. 5. 1928, pp. 14. Address: Superintendent of Documents, Washington, D. C. 10 cents. Presents existing methods of lumber grading and points out the advantages of extending grade marking to all lumber products.

**HOW LUMBER IS GRADED**, by U. S. Forest Service. Department Circular 64. 1933, pp. 48. Address: Superintendent of Documents, Washington, D. C. 5 cents. Gives lumber grades used by various lumber producing associations.

**SELECTION OF LUMBER FOR FARM AND HOME BUILDING**, by C. V. Sweet and R. P. A. Johnson, U. S. Forest Service. Farmers' Bulletin No. 1756. April 1936, pp. 46, illustrated. Address: Superintendent of Documents, Washington, D. C. 5 cents. "This publication is intended to aid all who want to acquire a basis for independent judgment of the wood they are buying." Classifies wood according (1) to principal farm and home uses, and (2) to properties of wood such as hardness, weight, freedom from warping, ease of working, paint-holding power, decay resistance, toughness, etc. Discusses important points to consider in construction and maintenance work, and gives lumber grades and sizes.





# Squash

## ON THE MENU

Yellow Summer Crookneck is generally called a squash, though botanically a pumpkin. Note the ridged fruit stem characteristic of the true pumpkins.

**W**HENEVER a Puerto Rican girl wants to turn down a suitor, she calls him a calabaza—a squash. That the squash should be chosen as a term of opprobrium seems unjust, for this humble vegetable has much to recommend it. Like the pumpkin, which it closely resembles in many ways—in fact, many so-called squashes botanically are pumpkins—squash is a nutritious food. It can appear at the dinner table in a number of guises; in soups, muffins, pies, or as a vegetable. If properly stored, certain types of squash and pumpkin can be counted on for a fresh vegetable supply from midsummer to winter.

Pumpkins and squashes—both members of the genus *cucurbita*—are among the food plants that

### Summer brings its special types to add flavor and variety to moderate-priced diets

are natives of America. Indians grew them long before the white man put foot on these shores. In fact, the name *squash* is adapted from an Indian word meaning "eaten green." Now these crops have reached the status of big business. Commercial production of squash in the United States covers some 10,000 acres; crop value reaches over the million dollar mark. Massachusetts, California, New York, and Michigan usually lead the field in production. Pumpkin acreage for commercial production is around 4,000 acres; crop value, some

\$175,000. Champion States are California, Iowa, New York, and New Jersey.

Squashes come in two types, the summer and the winter, differing in character and habits of growth. The summer or bush squashes take less space in growing than their winter relatives which sprawl over the fields. Between them the two types cover a wide range of flavor, some being sweet and nutty, some mild, others strong in flavor like the pumpkin.

Excellent at this time of year and well into early autumn are the



Pumpkins can be grown profitably and picturesquely in the shade of some tall-growing plant, such as corn. . . . Shelves such as these (below) make excellent storage places for hard-shelled squash.



Bush Scallops and Crooknecks, two kinds of summer squash found in most markets.

Bush Scallops, or Pattypans, travel under still another name in the South—Cymling. The word Pattypan accurately pictures this popular summer squash with its disk shape and scalloped edge. Earliest maturing of the squashes, the Pattypans come in white- or yellow-skinned strains. Preference points to the white, which has a smooth pale-green skin and milky, firm flesh. Pattypans may vary from button to pie-tin size.

Long, curved necks and more or less rough rinds characterize the Crooknecks. Favorite among these is Yellow Summer Crookneck, its yellow warted skin covering tender cream-colored flesh. Paradoxically, one Crookneck variety is the Straightneck, friend of the packer because its shape lends itself admirably to shipping.

Vegetable marrows, less known here than in England and Italy, are tender and mild flavored. They are usually shaped somewhat like a cucumber. Look about for the dark-green Cocozelle or light-green Zucchini with its gray mottlings, if you crave variety in squash fare. Both are grown for early markets in limited areas.

Pick your summer squashes for freshness and heaviness for their size. Remember that, unlike the winter varieties, summer squashes should be eaten while young, that is, while the skin is tender enough so that a fingernail indents it. This will mean that seeds are tender, too—an important consideration, since summer squashes frequently are eaten without discarding rind or seeds. The whole fruit is cut in pieces, then steamed and mashed with butter, or, perhaps, fried. If you are looking for a good pie filling, pass up the summer squashes in

favor of the winter varieties. For food value, too, the winter varieties are the better bet with their slightly larger amounts of protein, starches, and sugar. Yellow varieties are rich in Vitamin A and are a fair source of iron and phosphorus.

Big consumer appeal lies in the dry and mealy winter squashes—the Boston Marrow (not to be confused with the vegetable marrows), the Hubbards, the Delicious. Most of the winter types have dark-green or orange-colored rinds, so thick that it sometimes takes an axe to split them. Hardness of skin proves an asset in a winter squash, however, for upon this quality depends storage ability.

Hubbard is a winter squash standby, fine in quality, flavor, and storage qualities. Credit for its origin goes to James Gregory, a seedsman of Marblehead, Mass., who had the first variety called to his notice by an old washerwoman named Mrs. Hubbard. Now there are numerous Hubbard squash strains, most of them bearing fruit of an irregular oval shape with heavy, warty skins. In color the Hubbards run through a good part of the rainbow with their yellow, orange, green, and blue rinds.

Green Hubbard, best liked of any winter squash, is about 12 to 14 pounds in weight, round and warted.

Zucchini, a cucumber-shaped Vegetable Marrow known to Italians, comes to market early.

The thick dark-green skin is often streaked with grayish white. During storage this rind turns a dusky brown. Break the protecting coat and you find a bright-yellow flesh that is fine-grained and rich—reason enough to be grateful to Mrs. Hubbard.

Topping the Hubbards in flavor is the Delicious, another hard-shelled winter squash. This one has a smooth green skin and fruit pointed at the blossom end.

Squashes may weigh as much as 100 or 120 pounds. These are too coarse for eating but make good stock feed. Such monsters as the Genuine Mammoth regularly carry off prizes for size at county fairs.

Have a care in choosing your winter squashes, particularly if you intend to cache some of them against the winter months when prices are higher. Winter sorts won't keep unless they are well matured and thick-skinned. Soft-rind winter squashes have flesh that is thin, watery, and insipid when cooked. Avoid decay on winter squash. This appears as a water-soaked area often covered with a brown moldlike growth.

With winter squashes, seeds are scooped out before the rich, golden slices of squash are slipped into the oven for baking. Whatever the method of cookery, scrape the shell

clean in eating, for the sweetest flesh lies next to the rind.

Not until crisp autumn days does the pumpkin really come into its own, notwithstanding the fact that pumpkin pie comes to table the year round. Pumpkins somehow seem a more typically American vegetable than squashes, probably because they are inevitable accompaniments of our Hallowe'en and Thanksgiving Day dinners. Count on most of the pumpkins—the Small Sugar, the Winter Luxury, the Large Cheese, and Cushaws—for pie-making, however, since they are too mealy for table vegetables.

Table Queen is a small pumpkin boasting fine baking qualities. Its convenient size has caught consumers' fancy. Cut in half, it makes two individual portions. The shell is hard, dark green and slightly ridged. In storage it turns the tawny orange-yellow color we usually associate with pumpkins.

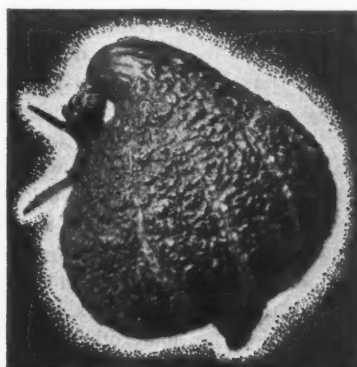
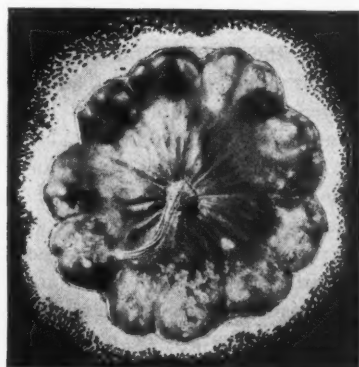
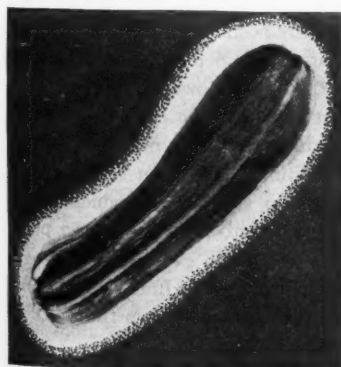
Like the large squashes, the mammoth pumpkins such as the Mammoth King step up at the county fair to receive blue ribbons for size. This variety has been known to yield 100 tons to the acre.

Large tonnage in both squashes and pumpkins goes into commercial canning, the resulting product

[Continued on page 18]

This flat, scallop-edged, green pattypan, or bush scallop, is a popular summer squash.

Warted Hubbard, with its thick rough skin, is one of the hardier winter squashes.



# Your Food Supplies & Costs

**F**RUIT and nut supplies this summer and fall, with the exception of citrus fruits, are expected to be much larger than a year ago and considerably above average. Indicated walnut and pear production is of record size. Apple and peach production promises to be the largest since 1931. The grape crop is expected to be the largest since 1928. Almond production not only appears to be double last year's small supplies but also the second heaviest on record. Heaviest marketings of peaches and pears ordinarily occur in August. Apple and grape shipments reach their peak during October.

A marked drop in fresh-vegetable prices from May 18 to June 15 offset price advances in all other important food groups, except dairy products, and resulted in a 0.2 percent decline in retail food costs in general. While part of this vegetable-price decline was the usual summer change, most of it was due to an unusually heavy slump in potato prices. Potatoes occupy an important position in the consumers' market basket and food costs. If potato prices had remained unchanged during the monthly period, food costs as a group would have gone up 1.1 percent.

Changes in food costs in different regions from May 18 to June 15 varied considerably from the averages for the country as a whole. In the States west of the Mississippi, where the drop in fresh-vegetable prices was greatest, the decline in costs ranged from 1 to 2 percent. In the East South Central, East North Central, and New England States, where higher prices for most other foods offset small declines in vegetable

prices, costs went up about one-half of 1 percent. Costs in the Middle and South Atlantic States dropped slightly more than the average for the country.

Higher prices for pork, beef, and lamb boosted meat costs 2.6 percent. Egg prices advanced seasonally 1.2 percent, and cereals and bakery products moved up 0.5 percent as white bread prices reached their highest level since 1930. Advancing lard prices were the major cause of an 0.7 percent increase in the cost of fats and oils. Cost of dairy products, however, went down 0.5 percent when butter prices hit their seasonal low. Fruit and vegetable costs as a group dropped 4.7 percent, but the decline was due to lower fresh-vegetable prices, since prices of apples and citrus fruits and canned items went up.

Index of retail food costs on June 15, as reported by the Bureau of Labor Statistics, was 86.3 percent of the 1923-25 average. This was 3 percent higher than a year ago. Increase over a year ago was due mainly to sharp advances in meats, and cereal and bakery products, which were 9 percent and 6 percent higher, respectively. Fruits and vegetables, the major factor up to the current month in keeping food costs in general above their 1936 level, were 7 percent lower than a year ago. Eggs were the only other item below their last year's level, the drop amounting to 1 percent.

Fruit and vegetable prices in general are expected to go down during the remainder of the summer and in the fall, but prices of most other items probably will go up. Changes

in the level of food costs will depend upon the relative rates of change in each food. Egg and butter prices usually advance during the last half of the year. Reduced supplies of pork and better grades of beef point to further price advances in these items. However, some price declines are in prospect for lamb, poultry, and lower grade cuts of beef.

Potato supplies are expected to continue relatively large during the remainder of 1937 and early 1938. Prices probably will decline further during the next 2 or 3 months and most likely will remain below their level a year ago. Supplies are now coming from the intermediate States, where a crop 50 percent larger than last year is expected. Production in the late-producing States, the source of supplies after August, is indicated to be not only substantially above a year ago but also above average. From May 18 to June 15 retail potato prices moved down from 3.6 to 3 cents per pound.

Low point in butter prices appears to have been reached in June, and prices most likely will go up seasonally during the remainder of 1937. Sharpest butter-price increases usually occur after August. During August and September prices are expected to be lower than a year ago, but they may go above 1936 prices during the last 3 months. Pasture conditions have been better than a year ago, and butter production during the third quarter of 1937 probably will be in excess of a year ago. From May 18 to June 15 retail butter prices moved down from 38.8 to 38.3 cents per pound.

Poultry prices probably will con-



tinue to decline seasonally during August and September, despite a sharp reduction in chick hatchings this year. Record cold-storage holdings will tend to offset smaller fresh supplies. Prices of roasting chickens, however, most likely will decline less than other classes and may even advance because supplies are only slightly above average. Most of the price decline probably will occur in lightweight chickens and fowls. Retail prices of roasting chickens went up from 32.3 to 32.7 cents per pound between May 18 and June 15.

Egg prices appear to have reached their yearly low point, and an upward price trend is in prospect for the remainder of 1937. The seasonal advance this year is not expected to be as large as in 1936, because of above average storage-egg stocks. From August through January the bulk of egg supplies comes from cold storage. Egg prices to consumers went up almost one-half cent to 32.5 cents per dozen from May 18 to June 15.

Hog marketings during the remainder of the summer probably will continue small, and prices are expected to be well maintained or to register slight advances. During the last quarter of 1937 and the first quarter of 1938 slaughter most likely will be smaller than that a year earlier. However, the relatively large size of storage stocks is tending to offset in part the price-boosting effect of reduced slaughter. Retail pork prices continued moving up from May 18 to June 15. Fresh pork and ham advanced about 1 cent per pound. Bacon and lard prices, however, were up only one-half and one-fourth cent per pound.

Grass-fed cattle supplies are expected to increase seasonally during the summer and fall. However, marketings of well-finished grain-fed cattle most likely will be smaller than usual. In view of the small supplies

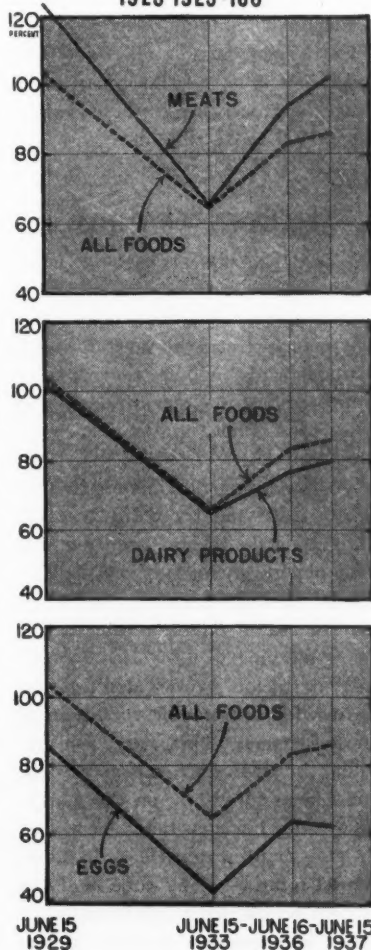
of better grade cattle it appears that prices of these grades will be well maintained. Upward trend in retail beef prices which commenced last June continued from May 18 to June 15. The price of steaks advanced about  $1\frac{3}{4}$  cents per pound, while roasts were 1 cent a pound higher.

Peak in lamb prices appears to have been reached. The delayed seasonal decline in lamb prices commenced in mid-June, but prices in early July were still higher than a year ago. Ordinarily lamb prices move down to their season's low in

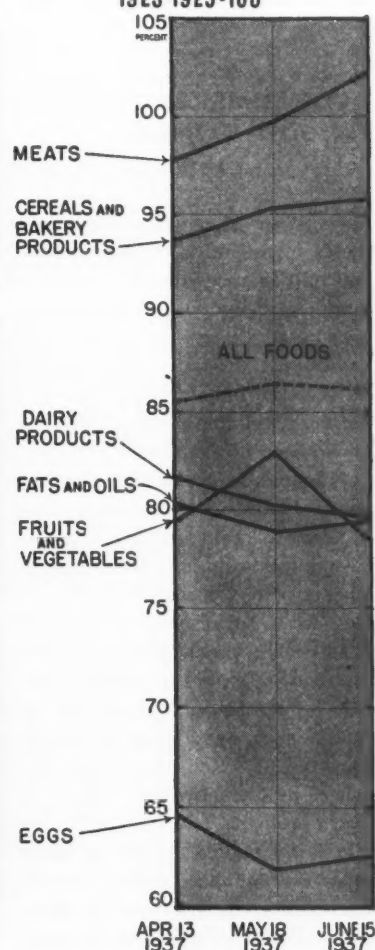
October. Only slight price declines are in prospect for August. Retail prices of all lamb cuts went up from May 18 to June 15, but most of the increase occurred in leg of lamb and rib chops. These two items advanced about 1 cent a pound, while other lamb cuts registered only slight increases or remained unchanged.

Average retail white bread prices in the United States moved up to 8.7 cents per pound on June 15. Since mid-February, United States average bread prices have gone up one-half cent per pound to reach their highest level since June 1930. At

A PERSPECTIVE OF FOOD COST CHANGES  
1923-1925=100



A CLOSE-UP OF FOOD COST CHANGES  
1923-1925=100



the same time wholesale prices of materials which go into bread have been going down. On the basis of estimated average cost of ingredients in a typical pound loaf of bread, computed by the Department of Agriculture, it appears that retail bread prices have gone up more than ingredient costs have increased, resulting in a wider gross margin to the baker and retailer. The gross margin between the cost of ingredients in a typical pound loaf of bread and the retail price of that loaf on June 15 was 5¾ cents. This was the highest margin for any date since January 1931. It also was at least one-half cent per pound above the yearly average margins in each of the last 5 years.

## CONSUMERS' QUERIES AND COMMENTS

[Concluded from page 2]

sugar flavor. This sugar has a lower sucrose content, a higher mineral and nonsugar content than the raw product. Mineral and nonsugar contents of the two types of sugars are different, however. For some of the material found in raw sugar was lost in the refining process; some was left in concentrated form.

Principal value of sugar in the diet lies in its sucrose, best measured in terms of calories. White sugar has the most calories. Therefore, as an energy food, it scores highest. In fact, white sugar contains twice as many calories per pound as does beefsteak. White sugar cannot possibly be considered a dead food, if by that is meant a food lacking in nourishment. Remember that it is richer in carbohydrates than its brown brothers.

Prize for popularity goes to white sugar on another count. White sugar adds pure sweetness to other products without changing the orig-

inal flavor; brown sugar always adds a foreign taste. Try a teaspoonful of brown sugar in your coffee and then a teaspoonful of white and you will see what this means. White sugar has other points in its favor. It has excellent keeping qualities and a strong appeal to the eye. It gives consumers what they want—a pure product that looks pure.

Price a wholesale lot of brown sugar and you will find it less expensive than the same amount of white. Retail packages of brown sugar run higher than the white, however. This is because brown sugar is not sold in as great a quantity. Yet for the small amount that leaves the grocers extra services in the matter of packaging and handling are required. Brown sugar may spoil, too. The consumer must pay the piper, or at least the grocer, for all these charges incidental to distribution.

## PICKING A WINNER

[Concluded from page 6]

must cultivate the fields, fight insect enemies such as the melon aphid, striped beetle, and cutworms; must spray against such death-dealers as wilt, root knot, anthracnose, and stem-end rot.

At harvesting time melons are cut ripe. Care and speed are essential in hauling the melons from the field and placing them in boxcars. Cars should be loaded, closed, and billed out the same day that the melons leave the vine.

Watermelon growers don't get off light with the troubles common to most farmers. They carry one peculiar burden, since melon acreage must keep constantly on the march. They must find new fields every year or else plant watermelons in long-period rotation. The same land can seldom be planted to watermelons 2 years in succession because of the

susceptibility of watermelon to wilt—a disease which stays in the soil for years after a crop has been harvested.

The nomadic melon may be able to settle down now that experiments conducted in Iowa have resulted in the development of wilt-resistant melons. At Muscatine, Iowa, one of the sections leading in the late melon-growing market, these new types, especially the variety known as Pride of Muscatine, have already met with huge success. It may be that within the next few years, these new strains will prove to be the god-send that watermelon growers in the wilt-infested area have been looking for.

## SQUASH ON THE MENU

[Continued from page 15]

being much alike in both cases. Varieties used for canning must be heavy yielders, with flesh of a good color and medium texture.

Planting of squashes and pumpkins takes place after danger of injury from low temperature is past, for both plants are sensitive to frost. Pumpkins require heat, too. However, the pumpkin is one of the few vegetables that thrive under partial shade. It can grow in the shadow of some tall-growing plant, such as corn, thus furnishing additional farm income from each acre so planted.

Winter varieties of squashes and pumpkins should be gathered and stored before autumn frosts nip them. If you have a good warm attic or cellar, you'll probably want to lay away some of these fruits. Good results come from first curing the pumpkins and squashes in a hot, well-ventilated room. Put them near the stove for about 10 days, then move them to a dry place with a temperature between 50° and 60°

F. Higher temperature would result in shrinkage and this would impair quality. No matter how ideal storage conditions are, though, quality and palatability decrease with length of storage. Remember to keep surfaces dry during the storage time, or mold may gather on the squashes. Don't pile the fruit upon each other, but place them in a single layer. Shelves in a well-ventilated room or near the furnace in the basement make excellent storage places, if you are lucky enough to have these. Thus stored, a supply of squashes and pumpkins should be on hand through Christmas, or under favorable conditions the squashes will last the year round.

**I**NTENSIFYING its enforcement of honest weights and measures ordinance, the New York City Department of Markets, Weights, and Measures is spotting violations at the rate of about 1,000 per month, a press report states. "Violations range from 'million-dollar' scales (supposed to make a million dollars for the owner) to huckleberry boxes with false bottoms. The scales are usually of the 2-pound capacity, spring type, from which the 20-pound face has been removed and a 25-pound face substituted. The huckleberry boxes, discovered by an investigator assigned to the Bronx, had their inner bottoms pushed up and wads of paper placed underneath, so that a pint container was made so small it held only two-thirds of a pint. Since the berries were dumped from the box into a paper bag the customer had no opportunity to examine the measure. . . . 'Bacon put up in 6-ounce packages', the report continues, 'was so often sold as a half pound that officials finally persuaded manufacturers to standardize their packages at 8 ounces.'"

## STUDY QUESTIONS FOR THIS ISSUE

1. Examine an advertisement of sheets appearing in a local paper. How many facts does the advertisement give regarding the construction and wearing qualities of the sheet?
2. Would the consumers in your town benefit from such a service as that of the large city department store described on page 27?
3. How would you go about getting such a service?
4. What are the identifying marks of the most popular watermelon sold?
5. Which is the largest watermelon producing State?
6. How many watermelons were produced last year?
7. What is the safest way to test for a good watermelon?
8. What is the food value of watermelons?
9. How does the marketing agreement covering watermelons help to raise prices to farmers?
10. Why should producers of watermelons be protected from very low prices?
11. Which are the three most important minerals we should get from foods?
12. Which foods are the most reliable sources for most minerals?
13. Name one reason why milk is so important in the diet.
14. Why should everyone eat some foods rich in iron every day?
15. Name 10 foods rich in iron.
16. Which types of squash are plentiful at this time of year?
17. How should you select summer and winter squash to get the best quality?
18. What are some rules to remember in storing winter squashes and pumpkins?
19. What are the prospects for supplies of fruits and nuts this year?
20. How did food prices on June 15 compare with prices a year ago? With prices in 1923-25?
21. How does the food value of white sugar compare with brown?
22. What are some of the reasons why brown sugar may cost consumers more than white?

## OUR POINT OF VIEW

*The CONSUMERS' GUIDE believes that consumption is the end and purpose of production*

To that end the CONSUMERS' GUIDE emphasizes the consumer's right to full and correct information on prices, quality of commodities, and on costs and efficiency of distribution. It aims to aid consumers in making wise and economical purchases by reporting changes in prices and costs of food and farm commodities. It relates these changes to developments in the agricultural and general programs of national recovery. It reports on cooperative efforts which are being made by individuals and groups of consumers to obtain the greatest possible value for their expenditures.

The producer of raw materials—the farmer—is dependent upon the consuming power of the people. Likewise, the consumer depends upon the sustained producing power of agriculture. The common interests of consumers and of agriculture far outweigh diversity of interests.

While the CONSUMERS' GUIDE makes public official data of the Departments of Agriculture, Labor, and Commerce, the point of view expressed in its pages does not necessarily reflect official policy but is a presentation of governmental and nongovernmental measures looking toward the advancement of consumers' interests.

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With watermelons, it's bigness that counts. Knowing types, seasons, and how to spot a ripe one helps, too, in getting your money's worth of this important summer diversion.

**MORE ABOUT MINERALS . . . . .** **7**

There's only a penny's weight of iron in the average body, but it plays a major part in making bodies good working and playing machines.

**COOPERATION . . . . .** **9**

Consumers and farmers in the business of supplying their needs cooperatively report developments in seven States.

**CONSUMERS' BOOKSHELF . . . . .** **11**

More sources of information for students of consumer problems on how to select wisely and economically household necessities.

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